

The Museum of Modern Art

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SPACES EXHIBITION OPENS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Five artists and a collaborative group, each given an area of The Museum of Modern Art's ground floor galleries and garden in which to work, have created an exhibition called SPACES which will be open to the public from December 30, 1969, through March 1, 1970.

Selected by Jennifer Licht, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture, the artists have created works which employ actual space and encompass the viewer and his actions within their confines.

Michael Asher has made a perfectly quiet white tranquil room; the walls, floor and ceiling are covered with acoustical panels. Larry Bell has created a completely black room, without any illumination, in which he placed huge panels of vacuum-coated glass. Dan Flavin built two free standing barriers of green and yellow fluorescent tubes converging at one end of his room. In Robert Morris' room, small spruce trees planted on steel-faced pedestals separated by narrow trenches create distant vistas for the eyes, confinement for the body. Franz Erhard Walther placed canvas-covered objects which visitors are invited to put on, move and hold in his canvas floored room. The Pulsa group, whose researches are sponsored by Yale University's Department of Art and Architecture and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, have created a light, sound and heat environment in the Museum Sculpture Garden by use of a variety of electronic devices that pick up sounds and movement in the Garden which are programmed through a computer and relayed back to the Garden.

Because so many of these artists use expensive and sophisticated industrial equipment and highly technical services, the Museum could not have afforded to present the exhibition without the generous cooperation of more than twenty companies. While industry supports the arts in a variety of ways, in this instance the Museum sought the material and services necessary for the realization of the work on the basis of specific requests made by the artists.

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Using sound absorbent material, donated by Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation on all surfaces of his room, Michael Asher eliminates visual and audial distractions so that visitors can experience total tranquility, total silence. The room (8' high x 23' wide x 21' deep) is dimly lit, bare and entirely white. Speakers hidden in the ceiling were lent by KLH Research and Development Corporation.

Larry Bell, whose carefully proportioned glass sculpture boxes are familiar to Museum visitors, used vacuum-coated glass for this show on an architectural scale he had not attempted before. Large panels of glass are installed in his totally black room (14' high x 17'6" wide x 39'6" deep). The only source of light is from outside so that visitors are dimly reflected in the glass panels and the visual experience changes depending on their movements.

In contrast, Dan Flavin has constructed his work entirely of green and yellow fluorescent light tubes so that the light itself transforms the architecture of the gallery (14' high x 20'6" wide x 33'6" deep). He has arranged 32 eight-foot fixtures and 64 four-foot fixtures into two separate structures that form interior "barriers" starting in the corners at the entrance to the gallery and converging at the far end. The lights were donated by General Electric Large Lamp Division; the fixtures partially donated by Curtis-Electro Lighting, Inc.

Robert Morris has created a situation that combines contradictory elements: endless vistas for the eye; cramped, confined space for the body. On terraced pedestals, he planted at eye level groves of 144 miniature Norway spruce trees, 6 inches to 2 feet tall, donated by the Lake Mary Nursery, Kimberly-Clark Corporation. The pedestals occupy most of the gallery leaving only a steel-faced cruciform trench which constricts and controls the action of visitors. The trees are being kept alive during the exhibition by horticultural consultation services donated by Manhattan Gardner Ltd. Full Spectrum Vita-lites donated by Duro-Test Light Bulb Center, and a refrigeration system that keeps the room (14' high x 26' wide x 26' deep) at 50 degrees Fahrenheit and the humidity at 80 per cent, installed with the help of Tomlinson Refrigeration

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and Supply Co. The Cor-ten steel on the floor and sides of the pedestals was donated by Joseph T. Ryerson & Son, Inc.

Pulsa, a collaborative group of research associates in the arts formed in 1967, has created a programmed environment involving sound, light and temperature control in the Sculpture Garden. Electronic equipment translates all movement in the Garden into sound and light patterns by means of a complex computer program. Television cameras and directional microphones placed in the Garden transmit movements and sounds to a control booth inside the Museum which can be observed by the public. There the information is analyzed and converted through a computer into new sound and visual patterns which are then relayed back to the Garden through speakers and strobe lights. ~~All the activity can be stored on tapes and replayed.~~ Infra-red heaters have been placed in the Garden to create warm pathways and zones so that visitors will be encouraged to walk out of doors in winter months. Present members of the Pulsa group are Michael Cain, Patrick Clancy, William Crosby, William Duesing, Paul Fuge, Peter Kindlmann and David Rumsey. This is their first outdoor exhibition in New York City.

The computer, teletype and data-phone were donated by Agrippa-Ord Corporation, and the computer is programmed by Dr. Robert Nagel. The transistors were donated by Radio Corporation of America, power conditioner lent by Ambac Industries, speakers lent by Electro-Voice Incorporated and Bauer Electronics. Amplifiers were lent by Bogen Division of Lear-Siegler Incorporated, microphones lent by Electro-Voice Incorporated, wire donated by Whitney - Blake Corporation, outdoor infra-red heaters lent by Luminator Incorporated. The heater switches are lent by General Electric, and the strobe light bulbs donated by Sylvania Electric Products, Inc.

In his room Franz Erhard Walther has installed "Instruments for Processes" which visitors are invited to put on, hold and move. With these "instruments" he explores the psychology of personal space and activity. Created during the past seven years, Walther's "Instruments" are made of canvas, muslin, felt, foam rubber, composition board and leather. Unlike the other galleries, which are enclosed by solid walls,

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Walther's space has a glass wall on 54th Street so that visitors see his room and the activity against the background of a mid-Manhattan street scene.

The catalog for the exhibition contains photographs taken by Claude Picasso during the three weeks preceeding the exhibition opening while the workmen and the artists were creating the spaces. Statements by each artist and an introduction by Jennifer Licht constitute the text. The cover was contributed by the Celanese Corporation.

Because in some cases the artists have treated all six surfaces of their galleries, visitors will be asked to remove their shoes at the entrance to the exhibition where enlarged photographic panels of Picasso's photographs of the stages of construction will be hung.

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Additional information, catalogues, and photographs available from Joan Wiggins, Coordinator, Press Services, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212) 956 - 7297, 7501.